

November 19, 2012

Rodger Lawrence  
Memphis General Manager  
Republic/ Allied Waste  
3840 Homewood Road  
Memphis, TN 38118

Dear Mr. Lawrence and Republic/Allied Waste,

We, the Board of Concerned Community Leaders, composed of engaged community members from diverse backgrounds, have come together to speak on behalf of the sanitation workers employed with Republic/ Allied Waste.

Workers are any company's most valuable resource. They are particularly important for a company dedicated to serving the public. We encourage this company to protect the workers and to promote their well-being, now and upon retirement, in gratitude for their faithful service and excellent labor.

The Sanitation workers employed with Republic/ Allied Waste perform back-breaking work under very difficult conditions, whether inclement weather, unsafe neighborhoods, dangerous waste products, or many other difficulties. The workers do a great job despite all the harsh conditions they encounter on a daily basis.

Sanitation workers get up every day of the year and perform a service crucial for the health and well-being of the Memphis community. These workers are conscientious and love their work. We have heard the passion with which they describe their daily toil, and the pride with which they speak about a job well done and a satisfied customer. These workers know they have to finish the job every day, and they do this despite great personal cost.

We, the Board of Community Leaders, believe it is unconscionable to pay Memphis workers lower wages than workers employed by the same corporation in other cities. We believe it is unconscionable to risk the workers' livelihood in old age. We believe it is unconscionable to expose the workers to untold dangers. And we believe it is unconscionable to neglect the needs and the rights of the workers who perform such an important and valuable service to our Memphis community.

Given the history of workers' struggles in this city, such as the heroic 1968 Sanitation Workers' Strike which saw the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we support the workers of Allied/Republic in any action they deem fit to achieve the respect they deserve. While the workers themselves have expressed a desire to avoid any work-stoppages out of respect for their customers, the community understands that the basic human right of workers to strike expresses a legitimate and just response to their continued exploitation by Republic/ Allied Waste.

We strongly support the sanitation workers employed with Republic/ Allied Waste and urge this company to respect the human dignity of the workers, and to demonstrate this through just wages, a fair pension, sufficient health insurance, and through protecting the health and safety of the workers as they perform their duties.

The community cares about its workers.

Respectfully,

The Undersigned (in alphabetical order)

Dr. Elena Delavega  
Assistant Professor of Social Work  
University of Memphis

Reverend Mary Edwards  
Pastor  
The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Reverend Peter R. Gathje  
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